Stepper for Taiwanese SAW device maker

Ultratech Stepper Inc (San Jose, CA, USA) is shipping its first order to Taiwan for an i-line reduction stepper (an XLS 7500) for SAW and MEMS devices. This follows completion in Q1/2001 of the new fab of Branchy Technology Co (founded in 1989 in Tao Yuan Hsien, Taiwan).

Branchy designs, engineers and maintains vacuum and process technology solutions for the PE-CVD, CU-CVD, Photo-CVD, MOCVD and CBE markets.

Ultratech's CEO Arthur W Zafiropoulo, said, "We have identified this region as a high-growth market for SAW devices, as well as MEMS and GaAs. The order signifies renewed interest for SAW and MEMS manufacturing lithography in Asia-Pacific – especially Taiwan and China, he adds.

SiGen seeks to invalidate SOI patent claim

Silicon Genesis Corp (Campbell, CA, USA) has filed for a summary judgment to invalidate a key patent claim for silicon-on-insulator technology in a US lawsuit filed by SOITEC SA (France) over a technique that employs implantation to form a cutting region in bonded wafers. SiGen claims that patent No. 5,374,564 "fails to teach those skilled in the art how to make and use the full scope of the experimentation" as required by previous court rulings.

"More specifically, the patent fails to teach how to use the claimed invention with all claimed gas ions".

Further US$9m DARPA/ARL contract for JMAR

Following a US$1m initial-phase contract from DARPA/US Army Research Lab (see Issue 2, p11), JMAR Technologies (Carlsbad, CA, USA) has been awarded a US$9m research contract to build an integrated engineering prototype of a point-source x-ray lithography system. This will include an XRS 2000 NanoPulsar lithography stepper made by SAL, powered by a 25 W collimated JMAR PXS-125 laser plasma x-ray source of 1 nm wavelength (the first x-ray point-source system with a collimator to be used in semiconductor manufacturing). The system will be used for the production of high-bandwidth GaAs devices for optical networking, high-performance wireless telecoms and military markets.

JMAR expects further DARPA funding by year-end for system installation and checkout.